

**Government Reform Subcommittee
Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources
Hearing on Drug Trafficking along the Boarder
Opening Remarks
June 14, 2005
Congresswoman Diane E. Watson**

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Despite increased efforts, our borders remain insecure. Terrorists can exploit the same vulnerabilities exploited by drug traffickers.

I am not sure that the creation of the Department of Homeland Security has improved our efforts to secure our border. We now have a situation where one cabinet level department, Homeland Security, is responsible for securing the border, but another, Justice, is responsible for stopping the drug dealers who violate the border. The previous arrangements may not have served us very well, but this new arrangement, while more expensive and more bureaucratic, has yet to prove that it is more effective.

One element that seems to be completely missing from this discussion is the role of the State Department and our diplomatic service. Mexican gangs now dominate drug trafficking into the United States. If we are to truly shut off this avenue, and better secure our Southern border, we must do more to engage the Mexican government, and support them in efforts to improve the administration of justice in their country.

The combination of Justice, Homeland Security, and the State Department will send a resolute, and unified, message to the drug cartels. It will also cover all the different aspects of government necessary to combat illicit drugs.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to conclude by commending the extraordinary effort that the men and women of our anti-narcotic forces provide. I am encouraged that the war against illegal drugs can be won if we remain vigilant. Congress must keep watch in order to remove unnecessary bureaucratic barriers, and we must refine inter-agency coordination as necessary.